

THE EXISTENCE OF THE REPUBLIC.

In an ingenious eddy of "queries" appearing in "The Free State", Professor Eoin MacNeill suggests to the Republicans of Ireland that since the existence of the Republic seems to them independent of the majority vote, governmental function and recognition by foreign powers, they should be content with this immaterial Republic and let the material Unionists have their way.

Under the facetious cynicism of this contention there lies an appreciation of a fact: Professor MacNeill recognises that the idea of a free and sovereign Ireland is so deeply rooted in primitive human instinct and moral law, so richly fructified with the blood-offerings of generations that as long as Ireland lives it can never die. He knows that as long as the Irish race survives, under no matter what tyranny or what beguiling semblance of native rule, there will be men and women owing allegiance to no authority but that free and sovereign State of which the Republic is the incarnation today. He knows that if, for dark periods, that State has no embodiment in a Government there will be anarchy in Ireland because no other government will be permitted to function there. And he knows that so long as there is any centre or symbol, however obscure, any leader or representative, however persecuted, left to the Republicans of Ireland, to that symbol, to that leader, their unconquerable allegiance will be given, as it is given to de Valera now.

An existence in the love, faith and allegiance of Republicans, the Republic will always have; but can that existence be, as Professor MacNeill would suggest, self-sufficing - its own end? To honest men and women who love Ireland, love ordered life and real endeavour - no! Rooted in love and faith, the Republic lives by hope. It is not the dream of sentimentalists, not the Utopia of academic philosophers - it is, and has ever been, the strong, simple purpose of simple men, straight thinkers and fighters who took life and gave their own lives that a free Ireland might exist among the proud states of the world. Take that sincerity of purpose out of Ireland's war and what were Emmet and Tone? Adventurers, reckless spendthrifts of men's lives. What were Pearse and his comrades but vain-glorious wreckers of their country's peace? What were Terence MacSwiney and Kevin Barry but deluded fools? What were Eoin MacNeill and his colleagues in Dail Eireann but cynical braggarts or perjured knaves? Did Eamon de Valera and those who, with him, repudiated this ignoble treaty, repudiate it with a secret hope that it would be carried through, leaving them with clean hands, but with the fruits of a disgraceful peace? Only minds unacquainted with sincerity could believe so mean a thing.

No. The Republic lives today with a three-fold life. It lives legally and constitutionally because the people of Ireland have never disestablished it by their vote; it lives actively in the will of those Irish men and women who give their aid to the Army of the Republic their loyalty to the Chief of the Republic, their labour to the cause of the Republic still; and it lives spiritually in that devotion to the ideal of a free and sovereign nation which has never died in Ireland and can never die.

Men have gone to their deaths, maybe, for faery tales; there is no record in the world of thousands of men and women living, striving, suffering through long years, enduring prison and poverty and danger for a thing utterly unreal. Though the Republic may have faded in the strange mind of Eoin MacNeill to a shadowy mirage, it is a living and a proud reality to Irish men and Irish women still, and a purpose, and a victory that shall be.

THE PRISONERS DEFENCE ASSOCIATION has addressed the following letter to His Eminence Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh, and the Most Reverend Bishops who adopted the Pastoral of October 11th, 1922.

We, the mothers and wives of the prisoners of war, having read the Pastoral issued by your Lordships appealing for support for the present Provisional Government, beg respectfully to state that we cannot give the Provisional Government our support, and that we conceive it to be our duty to combat it by every means in our power for the following reasons :-

That it is dishonouring Ireland; and that it has at present, illegally, in its jails nearly 7,000 untried prisoners varying in age from children of 14 to elderly men.

That it is keeping these prisoners in conditions of overcrowding and dirt dangerous to health.

That it is separating many thousands of husbands and wives so completely that they may not even see each other through prison bars.

That it is taking young boys - as young as 13 - from the pious care of their mothers, and shutting them up under dissolute and drunken guards of the type of Dolan. (A notorious drunkard, who a year ago was arrested for shooting a man in some Music Hall brawl, was admitted to bail, broke his bail, and is now Commander of the Guard in Mountjoy.

That they are tempting prisoners to extract from them information - (many cases are known to us, details of which we can supply if called upon to do so.)

That its officers are murdering prisoners after arrest, as can be proved by the inquests.

That it now proposes to deport to some English island far over seas, the Volunteer soldiers, our sons and husbands, who fought for Ireland's freedom.

We beg respectfully to express our regret that the Venerated heads of our Church have not striven for peace by more equitable and practical means, proclaiming a truce of God for both sides, and condemning outrages by whoever committed.

Signed on behalf of Prisoners' Defence Association,

MAUD GONNE McBRIDE.

IN CUSTUME BARRACKS, ATHLONE, a prisoner named Patrick Mulrennan was shot and severely wounded by Comdt.Gen.Lawlor. An intercepted letter from this officer boasts of his achievement: "It was a wonderful shot". Major General McKeen, while Mulrennan lay bleeding on the ground shouted to the other prisoners "By God, some more of you would need it too!" Mulrennan lies in hospital in a very critical condition.

THE FENIAN is the latest victim of Free State press censorship. We regret the attack on our gallant contemporary, but do not doubt that we shall soon have the satisfaction of welcoming "The Fenian" as well as "An Poblacht" once more to the light of day.

Truth, like murder, will out.

WINN OW ING.

As one sinister and crazy act follows another from those who hold the bludgeon of Government now, and treachery unmasked, cowardice stripped of disguise, are revealed in the dealings of men who seemed heroes once, a phase haunts me that I heard murmured by a woman at the funeral of Cathal Brugha. We passed under a balcony where stood a group of Free State soldiers, their faces sullen with grief and shame. She looked from them to the faces of the young men who followed the hearse - faces tense with grief and pride. "It is God" she said, "winnowing the wheat from the chaff".

A slow strange winnowing it seemed at first; the mood of war-weariness and compassion for human suffering that overwhelmed some of the best; the subtle promise of evasions that made many hope to have it both ways; the joys of uniform and position and good pay that drew irresponsible boys and the fathers of starving families into the Free State army; then the bewildering trickery of the election whereby this Government clothed itself in a semblance of democratic right; so group after group of men and women who had believed themselves faithful were lured over to England's side.

The winnowing goes faster now. How against the Republic a war is waged; war in which men captured are condemned, not merely to loss of liberty, but to dirt and hunger and disease; war in which murderous blackguards are sent to raid houses and drag out young men to death, war in which Intelligence officers seek to obtain information, not by reconnaissance work, but by torturing prisoners; war in which girls are assaulted and boys murdered for daring to declare the truth.

Yet fiercer the winnowing is to be. To desert the Republic now is to win immunity; to be steadfast is to incur such punishment, even to death or transportation, as this Government, aided by Britain, may devise.

It is well. The ranks of the Republic must be clean, surely; no weakling, no braggart, no timeserver can be left; the Free State has won them all. They who are faithful now, and they who are returning to their old allegiance, are the men and women who love honesty and courage and freedom, and are not to be bought or deluded by bribe or threat. England has learnt now the full number of her servants, and Ireland knows her own

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MOUNTJOY.

Women crouching against the bars of the iron gates in a dumb anguish of suspense; the sudden choking breath when the name is passed through of human dead, and a widow led away to her desolation; the vigil in the cold autumn dawn, the murmur of the rosary, broken with weeping, under the stark shadow of an armoured car - it was a tragically familiar scene. Only, when the men in the armoured car and the gaolers behind the gates wore khaki, there was mute acceptance of their enmity, but the pitiless names "murderer" - traitor - judas" were cried wildly out against the men in green. The fine chivalry of the prisoners who sent out word that their guards were not to be blamed was beyond the reach of mothers robbed of their sons. They realised only at that climax of long pent resentment, that their boys, for being faithful to the Republic, had been imprisoned, and goaded by the conditions of their imprisonment to make a mad effort to escape, were shot down in the attempt. And who is to blame if not these Irishmen who take blood-money to be their gaolers and stand ready to shoot?

The prisoners had the higher justice, but the women were not wholly wrong. For these soldiers in Pearse's uniform are not irresponsible fools. They have seen Autumn around Mountjoy, they know what the work of the Empire within that prison means. Some of them were praying out side the gate, maybe, when Kevin Barry was hanged. They know what is coming in Ireland - that it is holding the gate against a rescue they will be when the next Kevin Barry dies. Would not poverty, hunger, danger, imprisonment, death, be more welcome to them than that shame?

VIGIL - A MEMORY.

It is a pain and heaviness in the heart, that memory, less than a vision in the eye of the mind - the slow unbearable night, stifled with horror because men lived who could do such things and men and women could consent to them. And the slow, cold dawn; the throng of suffering faces round Mountjoy; the pulse-beat of life stilled; almost, with unutterable pity and pain.

But that pity, that anguish was no new or solitary thing; it was but a wave of the bitter tide that has been breaking upon the hearts of Ireland for hundreds of years; the life that was being plundered was but the latest of a myriad lovely lives; and those who watched seemed but a thousand incarnations of one spirit, self-dedicated, stronger than brothers in comradeship, many, surely, foredoomed.

It came near to eight - the time when the terrible bell should toll and no glimpse of the sun. Clouds lay low over the city; the bare trees stood starkly against a bleak sky; the chill colourless daylight was dreadful, like a world from which all courage had gone.

Then, at the one moment, the sun rose, breaking out through the clouds, clear and golden, and the bell tolled. That sudden, incredulous huddering moan that has become familiar now went up from the kneeling crowd; a girl clung, sobbing wildly, against the gate; over the throng of kneeling people a black flood of hate and misery flowed. Then strangely, it lightened; over us, in the warm sunlight, a breath as of young laughter seemed to pass - sweet and compassionate and serene - like the passing of one who understood, and was lightheartedly sorry for our pain - one springing upward to the sun.

To Ireland then was given the last message of Kevin Barry - "Fight on! Live for the ideal for which I am about to die".

We thought, in those days, that Ireland must be near the end of her sorrows, but war is always longer, sacrifice always more costly, than men foretell. The dark tale has begun over again. Heavy and hopeless as that night of waiting were the days after Ireland's freedom seemed to have been signed away; more dreadful than to realise the ruthlessness of England was it to discover the treachery of our own. Dreary as that clouded daybreak is this bitter strife - comradeships that made war splendid broken and gone - the Republicans of Ireland deserted, betrayed and hunted by those who were their heroes and their friends.

It may be, too, that a yet more harsh shock of anguish is to break upon Ireland's heart, like the tolling of that fatal bell. And it may be too, that that moment will be the moment of the rising of the sun.

For although, at the command of their new masters, Irishmen who loved Kevin Barry have made war on the Republic for which he died, it is likely that a change will come. It is likely that when they are ordered to intensify torture, ravage more savagely, let prisoners die of hunger in their gaols, burn, murder, hunt with bloodhounds, hang boys in Mountjoy - it is likely that then, at long last, they will revolt, and seeing how loathsome is the thing they have been serving, turn back to their own. And what matters anything our ancient enemy can do to us when we stand as one for the Republic again?

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LATEST NEWS.

DOMINICK KENNEDY a prisoner in GORMANSTOWN INTERNMENT-CAMP was severely wounded in the shoulder on Saturday last at 9.40 p.m. by a shot fired into V.Hut.

The hut was quiet, the seven occupants were making their beds. Prisoners in a hut adjoining the sentry post heard quite plainly the following remark passed between two sentries: "They put out the lights in the hut - what about another one in?". Then the shot was fired.

This is one of numerous occasions on which men's lives have been seriously endangered by shots wantonly fired into the huts without provocation or reason. Kennedy is the second prisoner in this camp wounded by the guards.

MISS MAC SWINEY.

The following letter was sent to the Irish Independent the Freeman's Journal and the Irish Times on 15th November. It was suppressed by the provisional Government Censor.

To the Editor.

Mountjoy Prison,
15th Nov., 1922.

Sir,

Mr. Cosgrave's statement on the detention of Miss MacSwiney raises points of interest to every Republican at present in an Irish gaol, and especially to the women arrested in Suffolk Street on Thursday last. Against these, as against her, no charge has been made. Some of us are, however, perfectly aware of the reason for her arrest. We were maintaining the Republican idea as writers, speakers editors and members of the Publicity Departments Staff, - we were, that is, engaged, like Miss MacSwiney, in speaking truths which the Provisional Government desires to keep concealed.

Any government, however constitutionally established, which treated its opponents in this way would earn contempt. The government which has imprisoned us consists of one section of a Coalition elected by the people of Ireland to secure internal peace. This section make instant use of its position of power to open violent war on its opponents - to kill or imprison the Representatives of the Republic - to entrap the Irish Nation into the British Empire by force and fraud.

There is no man or woman in Ireland arrested by this usurping junta who has not the moral right to resist by every means in their power; Miss MacSwiney, in her lonely and heroic protest, stands for us all.

Mr. Cosgrave cites the wounds of the Free State soldiers as a pretext for keeping Irish women in gaol. He knows that it is his government which led these unhappy men to become the tools and agents of that enemy power which every Irish Republican is bound by oath and conscience to oppose. He knows that his government now forces these soldiers on pain of death to fight for the British Empire against the I.R.A. He advances as a pretext for imprisoning Miss MacSwiney, Rory O'Connor's repudiation of the second Dail: what justice does his own supplanting of Dail Eireann by the Partition Parliament deserve?

Let Mr. Cosgrave spare us these attempts at diplomatic hypocrisy - the disciple need not hope to equal his masters in finesse. This struggle is the old struggle of might against right. Because he has the British Empire behind him Mr. Cosgrave is able to keep us in Prison; because he has the Empire behind him he may perhaps be able to keep Miss MacSwiney in prison until she has starved to death. But neither the wounds of his unfortunate soldiers nor our army's defence of the Republic gives him the right to do this.

The virtue of a cause may be judged by the means used to support it; if the means which England used against Terence MacSwiney are necessary to support the cause which Mr. Cosgrave represents it will perish by its own rottenness before long. The people of Ireland have only to know the truth; they have been learning it, surely, these twelve terrible days.

DOROTHY MAC ARLE.

According to the latest news from Mountjoy Miss MacSwiney is in a very weak condition and cannot be expected to last much longer. There is no truth in the rumour that she is to be released: that would be too much to expect from Mulcahy, the friend of Terence, and the god-father of his only child.

17: FREEDOM.

Area 2.



FREE STATER'S IN ACTION.

This 'congregating' attack was launched against some of the most notable anti-state and anti-imperialist members of the Free State, who were holding a meeting in a small room.

It is reported to have been the meeting in support of Miss Mary MacSwiney's heroic action in offering her life for the principles for which her martyred brother died.

The women finished their meeting, in spite of military's soldiers, and then retired to Liberty Hall, where they held another meeting. They were gathered by the enemy in two large cars, and again attacked.

Women, saying the outside of the car was fired on.

Boys on the street of the prison.

